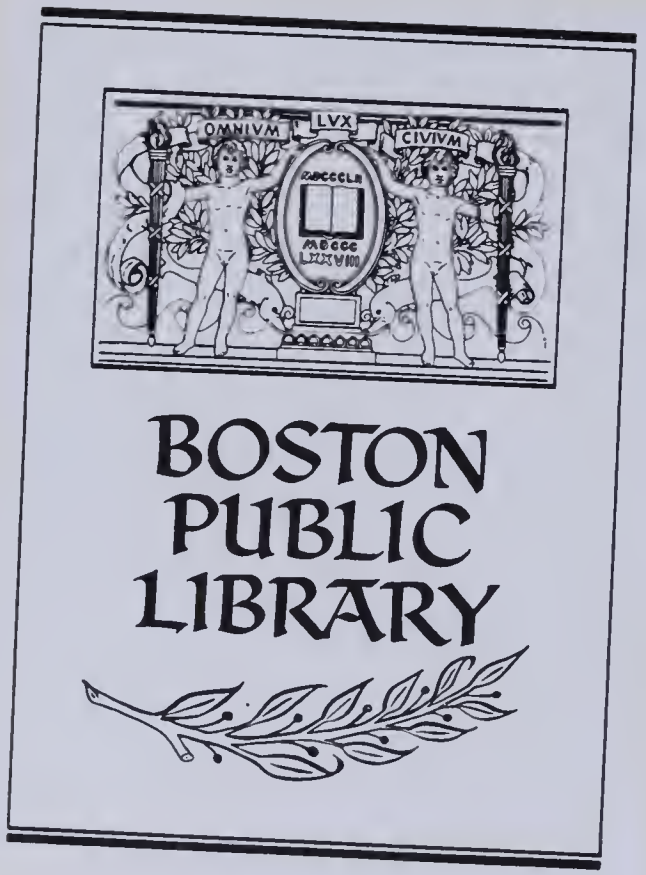
LIBRARIES



Cover photograph by Raul Gil

The library in Cummington, a tiny village in the Berkshire hills of western Massachusetts, was founded in 1872 by William Cullen Bryant, born there in 1794. In the early part of the nineteenth century, Bryant was America's most popular poet. His two most enduring works, written before he was twenty-one, were "Thanatopsis," in the English graveyard style, and "To a Waterfowl," pondering the meaning of life. He lived most of his life in New York City, and from 1829 on was editor-in-chief of the **Evening Post**. His gift of a library to his home town is an early example of such generosity

LIBRARIES
IN NEW ENGLAND

Our sincere thanks to the librarians and library trustees who shared with us information about their library buildings and the histories of their library organizations. We are sorry we haven't the space to relay all the insightful comments and wonderful anecdotes you provided.

This book is dedicated to you.

LIBRARIES
IN NEW ENGLAND

Margaret E. Haller

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Henry E. Peach

Harrisville, New Hampshire

INTRODUCTION

The New England of the calendars is a no-nonsense landscape. A house looks as though it had been lived in for two centuries. The barn is a place where you keep the cows. A lush common at the heart of the town is dominated by the white church with its steeple.

Take another look. In even the smallest of villages you will probably find a fanciful library unlike any other structure in the town. Some of these library buildings appear to come straight out of the pages of a fairy-tale book. Others are massive monuments in stone which resemble a courthouse, mausoleum, or even jail. Many of these buildings manage to combine several architectural traditions to produce a structure that has its own odd kind of beauty.

A great flurry of library construction began around 1880 and lasted through the turn of the century well into the days of World War I. During this period many, perhaps most, New England towns went from having no library, or a private, "social" one, to having a public library, often housed in a magnificent new building.

The building itself symbolized the importance of book learning. It conveyed America's new appreciation of European culture. It also expressed the democratic idea that each man and woman should be given the opportunity to improve himself.

Old Postcard, c. 1905

In 1852 the trustees of the Boston public library (not yet built) set the tone. "Reading ought to be furnished to all, as a matter of public policy and duty, on the same principle that we furnish education." To embody the sweeping magnificence of this concept, the Boston public library, built shortly thereafter, was not only impressive because of its sheer size, but also imposing, with a triple-arched entranceway and a tier of two-story windows above.

In the late nineteenth century, Colonial architecture was not revered as it is today. Many of the oldest buildings still standing then appeared merely dowdy. People who wanted to keep up to the tick looked to traditional European styles of architecture to express the new and more sophisticated America.

As each of the New England states in turn initiated a program to encourage the institution of libraries in local communities, beginning with gifts of books and the authorization to use educational funds for libraries, town after town responded and hastened to keep up with the times. Some town meetings allocated the "dog money," fees collected from dog owners, to library use, but usually this was not enough. Many communities were fortunate enough to have a local donor come forward. Sometimes these were maiden ladies with inherited money, but

more often they were successful businessmen. Born in the village, they had left home when young and now returned at least long enough to endow—what else?—an impressive library building. Often it was to memorialize their parents. They imported a big-city architect or, in a few cases, designed the library building themselves.

A major requirement was that it should look imposing from the street. The new libraries were lavished with columns of marble and adorned with cupolas, turrets, and towers. Windows were embellished with stained glass. The structure might be no more than thirty feet wide, but the effect must be truly grand. Nowadays this style is often labeled eclectic, Queen Anne or neo-something.

In 1893 the World's Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago. Its architecture was pure theater. The "Fair City" was described as a vast phantasm of shimmering light glittering with colonnades and domes. Over it all towered the golden Colossus designed by sculptor Daniel French. Such elegance was new to most visitors, and they returned home with their heads spinning. Critics expressed the hope that this might mean the end of slavish copying of the Gothic, as indeed proved to be the case.

The fad for postcards fed an increased interest in the possibilities of various architectural styles. Sending postcards, decried at first as "epistolary sloth," quickly became entirely acceptable. The cards were collected and hoarded and mounted in scrapbooks, and exchanged. The views of any large city included its library along with the town hall. Soon even small towns had their photographers who made up pictures of the local buildings to sell on postcards. Again, the library was a favorite subject.

The fad for these cards ran from the time of the Chicago Exposition until the first World War. Looking at these cards today, we can see an America going through its architectural adolescence.

The picture postcards we have included in this book show some buildings which no longer exist and others which have been modified through the years.

Some of the grandest of the library buildings had to be renovated almost immediately. In many instances, the librarians

who worked in them found that not enough shelving had been provided for the books, or that there was no workroom provided for the staff.

In 1915 Alice G. Chandler, a trustee of the Lancaster library in Massachusetts, complained after visiting a number of neighboring libraries: "Invariably one enters a lofty hall, occupying the whole height of the building, with reading rooms on either hand. The latter may be partly separated by low partitions and handsome columns, sometimes of real marble with carved capitals, on which, with the beautifully decorated ceiling much money has been expended..." But, she demanded to know, why had not more attention been paid to the comfort and convenience of the library's patrons and to the efficiency of the library's operation?

Successful renovations have been achieved in many of the most awkward buildings. Wings have been added to house the stacks, a children's room created in basement space. In many of these century-old buildings, the original structure remains merely as facade.

The visitor still finds it pleasant and rewarding to step inside, enter a reading room which has a fireplace with the portrait of the founder up over the mantel, sit in an old leather chair, observe the way the light descends like a blessing through the colorful panes of stained glass onto dark and carved woodwork.

Here and there some lucky towns were able to convert an old house into a library. Other villages are still today valiantly making use of the small wooden structures in which the library started. To learn about the history of a town's library, whether it is a renovated private house, a minimal structure, or a magnificent stone monument, is to gain insight into the lives of the people who have lived in that town.

BEGINNINGS

The first try at creating a public library in this country may have been made in Boston in 1656. A merchant willed his collection of books to the city, stipulating that there should be a building constructed to house it. A catalog was made up as more books were added. Unfortunately, the building was destroyed by fire in 1747.

Some people believe Benjamin Franklin should have the credit for inventing the social library which operated as a private club. He suggested to the members of a little group which had been formed "to nurture honest and decorous debate and thought" that they ought to work out some system for sharing their books.

Then in 1731 he founded the first subscription — that is, commercial — library. Such libraries operated usually as joint stock companies, with members buying shares. It might soon become apparent that if they were to be able to afford to buy more books, they were going to have to let more people in. New subscribers might join, then, for a stated period of perhaps a year. Soon Ben Franklin was declaring that these libraries "had improved the general conversation of Americans" and were succeeding in making "common tradesmen and farmers as intelligent as most gentlemen in other countries."

New York became the first state to recognize an obligation of the government to help provide books for all its people. In 1835 New York passed legislation permitting the establishment of a tax-supported and free library service in each of its school districts.

In New England, Massachusetts led the way. In 1848 it authorized the City of Boston to levy a tax in support of a public library. In 1851 this privilege was extended to its other cities and to the towns.

The rest of the New England states also enacted enabling laws: New Hampshire in 1849, Maine in 1854, Vermont 1865, and Connecticut and Rhode Island each in 1875.

By the year 1875, in the whole country there were 188 public libraries. Within the next dozen years this number would rise to 649 libraries.

It was reported in 1896 that in all the United States there were 971 libraries with collections of over one thousand volumes, and that half of these libraries were in New England.

Among the possible explanations for New England's preeminence is the one that New Englanders have always been "book people." A community willing to spend its tax money for adequate schools is likely to be the one with fine library facilities.

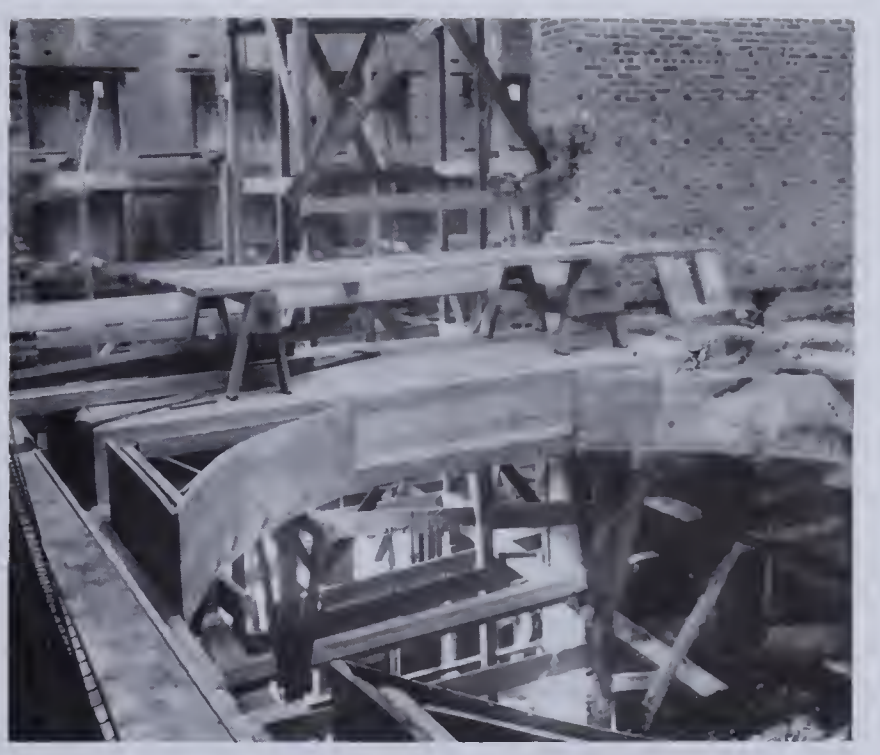
New England's leadership might also be explained by the rapid expansion of its manufacturing interests, and the consequent demand for educated workmen. There are few recorded instances of opposition to setting up a library. In New Hampshire, where the enabling legislation passed without significant debate, towns were permitted to tax themselves for a library for the purpose of creating "a diffusion of intelligence **among all classes** in the community."

When Boston built its great library, it had a population of about 160,000. The selectmen in a town of five hundred or less were not too impressed by the difference in size. They wanted a library, too, if possible one which should look just as grand.

New Bedford Free Public Library

In 1906 the City Hall was gutted by fire, leaving only the facade which appears here, water still trickling down the steps. The building was reconstructed as a library, the work taking four years.

New Bedford, Massachusetts



In a building which will be lavished with marble, preparations are made for the grand rotunda.

Interior stairs turn and spiral upward.

Franklin, Massachusetts

Benjamin Franklin, after whom this town is named, was solicited in 1785 for the gift of a bell for the steeple of the meetinghouse. He replied he'd rather donate books, "Sense being preferable to Sound." The original collection of over one hundred volumes out of his personal library is housed here. Unfortunately, at first there ensued a squabble over who should be permitted to borrow them. The matter was settled in 1790, finally, by the vote of the town that they should be accessible to everyone.

The building above, dedicated in 1904, was modelled on a temple of ancient Greece. When President Taft visited in 1916 he exclaimed, "I have never seen a town library equal to that of Franklin. It is a work of art and yet admirably adapted to the real uses of such an institution." The influence of its design may be traced in the libraries of many small towns.

Ernest Gould

Peterborough, New Hampshire

Peterborough claims the distinction of having the first tax-supported free library in the world. It was established in 1833. There had previously been a social library, but the "books wore out, and so did some of the attention given them." There had also been a "juvenile library" run by a minister, started in 1827. In the significant year of 1833, the selectmen voted to set aside a portion of the literary fund made available by the state, for the purpose of buying books to establish a library. The first catalog listed 499 volumes. Many of the books were of a religious nature, the rest dealt with history, education, and the lives of famous men; fiction was simply listed under miscellaneous. There were twenty-six titles in the latter category, ten of them books by the popular writer Maria Edgeworth.

The tiny building on the Windham common next to the library has been designated a library museum. Built in 1780, it once served as the office for Dr. Chester Hunt. Note the two doors.

Windham, Connecticut

The library building itself was built to serve as a bank, in 1832. It still preserves the feeling of its earlier use, with portraits on the walls and an antique grandfather clock. According to Lewis Mumford, the Greek style of architecture was popular in the 19th century because Greece appeared to have attained the very pattern of a democratic culture, and school boys still studied their Plutarch and recited Demosthenes.

Montville, Connecticut

The Raymond Library was established as directed in the will of Albert C. Raymond, who had been born in Montville and died at East Hartford in 1880. The original building, seen here in a recent photograph, was completed in 1885 at a cost of only slightly more than $2,600. Unusual features are its fireplace, the tall windows, and interior shutters. In 1969 a modern addition, hidden in this view, provided more stacks, more ample reading space, and a children's section of a lower floor, at a cost of $80,000.

Peru, Massachusetts

The tradition of public initiative in creating a new library lives on. In 1977 there were only 250 people living in Peru. When they decided to start a library, there had not been a library in town for fifty years. At first it was set up in a room only twelve feet square, in a building which had formerly been the town hall and was presently occupied by the Peru Recreation Association. Eleven years later, the library had expanded to occupy the whole building. At that time it made headlines as one of the last public buildings in the state to get rid of its old "two-seater" privy. This library is now a center of community life. Its many activities have included publication of a newsletter and monthly play-readings.

Brookfield, Massachusetts

This Queen Anne building stands at the edge of the historic Brookfield Common. It is known by two names, the Merrick Library or Banister Hall. In 1868 the Hon. Pliny Merrick, member of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, endowed a library with a gift of money and contributions from his own personal collection of books. At first the library was located in rooms on the second floor of the local high school. William Banister made possible the present building, erected in 1883. Among the decorative details lavished on this building is a lion's head from which the drain pipe emerges. The building's rather smug air is deserved: the interior is a classic of its style.

Conway, Massachusetts

Marshall Field, the proprietor of the great Chicago department store which bore his name, had been born in Conway, "in a house which stood a few feet west of the highest point on the road which passes over Field's Hill. He grew up on the family farm and attended the school in Pumpkin Hollow." At the age of seventeen he left Conway to go to work in nearby Pittsfield. In 1899, when he revisited his home town, he chose the site for the Field Memorial Library which would honor his mother and father.

"Heavy materials for the building were brought to the village on the Conway Electric Street Railway," according to a history of the library. "After tracks were laid on the surface of Main Street from the railway line... loaded cars rolled by gravity down the street and were drawn back by horses." The building was dedicated in 1901. Its exterior was limestone, the dome and roof copper. The structure still dominates the main street of this small hill town.

Wiscasset, Maine

Two views are shown here. The oldest part of this building was constructed in 1805 to serve as a bank, with the entrance around the corner. Some time later it was converted into a private residence and much enlarged. In 1923 it was turned to its present use as a library. From the rear it appears even larger and more grand. The interior still has some of the original furnishings of the bank. Pleasant areas for quiet browsing and an art gallery, along with the clever use which has been made of the space, make this library an attractive place to visit.

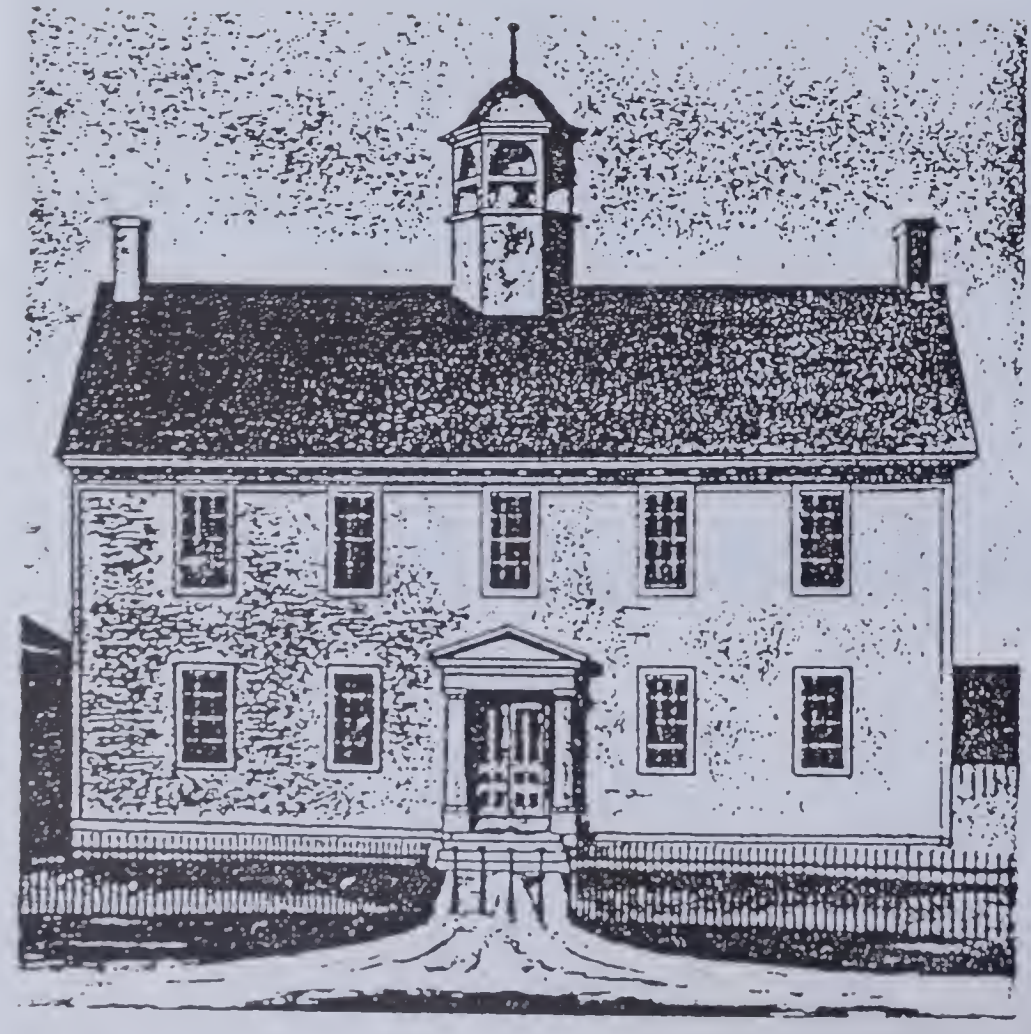
Brimfield, Massachusetts

Built in 1904, the Danielson-Lincoln Memorial Library is an anomaly in this town, so different in architecture from the Victorian town hall next door and the traditional white church across the way. It is in the dramatic Arts and Crafts tradition with a bit of Tudor grafted on. The stones used in its masonry were taken from old stone walls in the area. The structure, hugging the ground, was originally located in an apple orchard, of which there is no sign now. In 1965 a new wing was added toward the back to house a small museum of local artifacts and genealogical records.

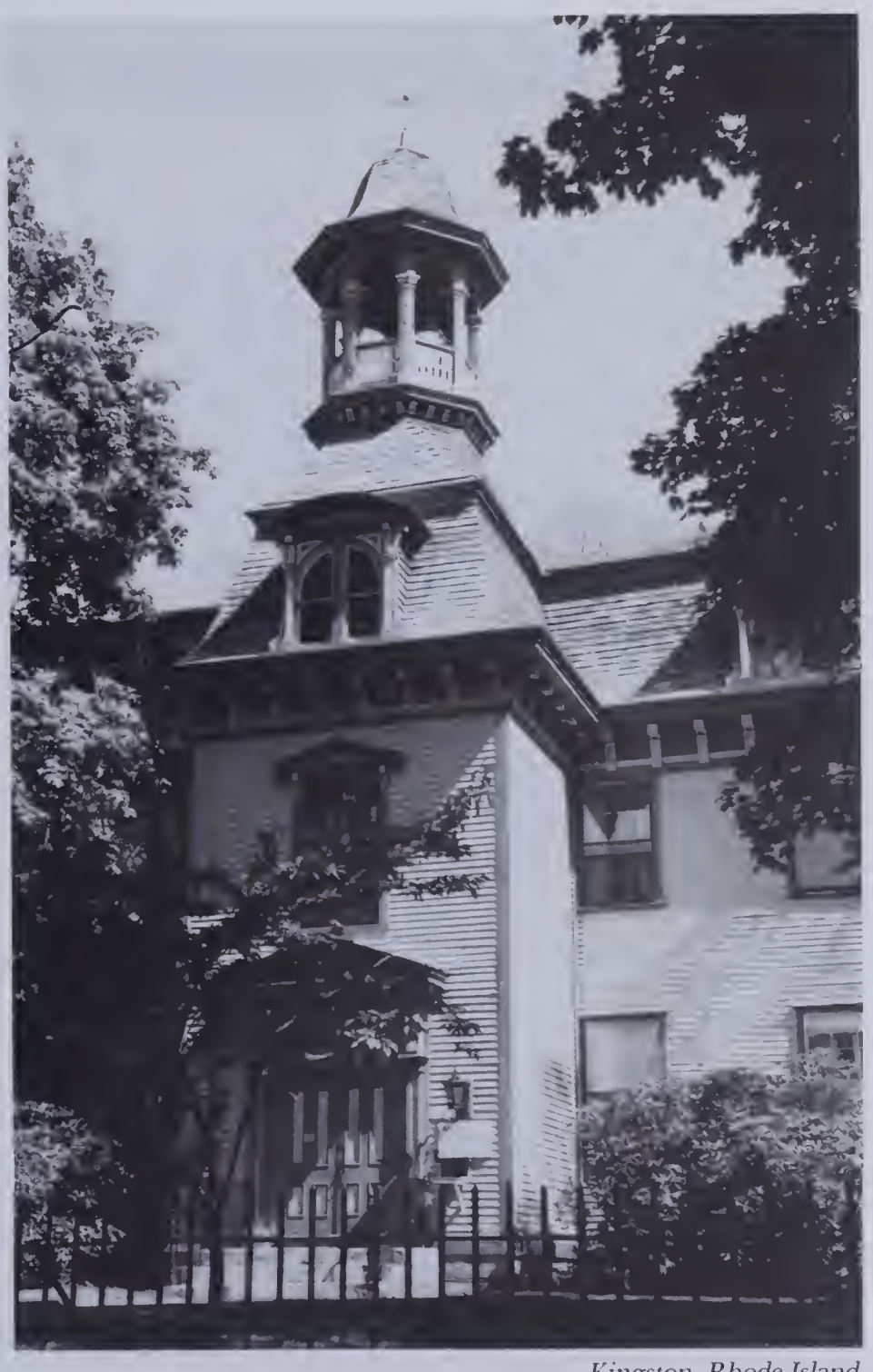
Wentworth, New Hampshire

The following description appeared in a pamphlet issued at the dedication in 1917:

"The building is fireproof, 23 by 50 feet. It has a stone portico and arch entrance with cement steps from the sidewalk leading to a commodious hallway. A stack room, a reading room and a ladies' retiring room lead off this hallway. The finish of the first floor is all in natural oak. The stack or book room has a capacity of 4,000 volumes, with ample opportunities for enlargement. A beautiful fireplace of fieldstone graces the reading room. Over the mantel of the fireplace is a panel in which has been placed photographs of the donors of the library as well as those of their parents. This room has a six-foot oak wainscotting. The East Room of the library has been set apart and designated as a historical room." Also, the basement was outfitted as a gymnasium. The donors of the library were the two sons of E. Kendall Webster, born in Rumney, N.H. in 1811, who had lived locally. Henry became a citizen of New York, George a resident of Massachusetts, but they never lost interest in the old home town.



The original building was constructed at the time of the American Revolution. The picture is greatly enlarged from an early drawing.



Kingston, Rhode Island

An old courthouse is now the home of the Kingston Free Library and Reading Room. Constructed in 1776, the building was originally the meeting place for the General Assembly. It has been enlarged and remodelled several times, most recently in 1976. The library has occupied the building since 1891.

The building shown in the postcard above served as the library before the new one was built. This is an island community with a present year-round population of about 600. The library, established in 1902, had originally been housed on the second floor of the school. It proved too hard to heat in winter, and Miss Alice, as the librarian was affectionately called, suggested this small house which could be rented for three dollars a month.

Alice L. Pendleton would eventually lead a campaign for a much larger building, which opened its doors in 1917. The grade-school children were excused from class to help move the books over. The bay was frozen over that winter, so the library furnishings came later when the ferry was again running.

The library is now raising funds for an addition toward the back.

Stonington, Connecticut

The building exemplifies all the charm of the classical libraries built at the turn of the century. This one opened in 1900. In spite of its grand appearance, the original structure, shown here, is only twenty by forty feet. A second major expansion was under way at the time of this photograph.

During the course of its long history, this library underwent many re-organizations. In 1813 it included the first ladies' library in the state. The building now in use was constructed in 1875, and a new wing added in 1974. A wide range of modern services is included in this far from modern building.

Abington, Connecticut

The old photograph was retrieved from the glass plate by a friend of the library, Walter A. Olsen.

Middle Haddam, Connecticut

The library is housed in a gambrel-roofed white frame building constructed in 1799 to serve as the village store, with living quarters at the back. In 1908 it was rescued from a delipadated condition and converted to library use.

Middle Haddam once served as a busy commercial port on the Connecticut River, and one of the joys of the successful renovation is that it recalls the traditions of local ship building.

Paris Hill, Maine

The above sketch shows this library as it once appeared when it was a jail. The wooden fence was intended to keep passersby from talking with the prisoners.

The building, constructed in 1822, still has wrought-iron hooks imbedded in the walls to support partitions to separate the cells.

In 1902 the Paris Hill Library Association took over the old jail and in an effort to modernize ripped out the second floor to create a more spacious interior and added the dome. The dome was a failure since it constantly leaked and water rained down on the books. Eventually it was eliminated, the roof raised, and the second story restored. The original granite floor, which was freezing in winter, was overlaid with wood. Today the library occupies the first floor and a museum is on the second.

Orange, Massachusetts

This building has survived two floods. In 1936 the icy and muddy waters of the nearby Millers River rose to over six feet high in the children's room in the basement, and again in 1938 as high as ten inches over the upper floor. More than 8,000 books were lost. The building has an underpinning of granite quarried in nearby Fitchburg. It was built in 1914, gift of the widow of John H. Wheeler, president of the New Home Sewing Machine Company. This elaborate structure in the French Renaissance style is faced in grey brick with limestone trim, the interior lavishly decorated with quarter-oak panelling. For a library in this town of just over 5,000 residents at that time, the cost was an astonishing $50,000.

Bakerville, Connecticut

In 1949 Barbara Yedlin of this small rural community toured the neighborhood with her son's little red wagon collecting books to start a library. When a schoolhouse built in 1832 became available, Mrs. Yedlin's collection was ready to be moved in as soon as the structure could be made suitable for library use. Other residents also contributed both time and money to the renovation.

New Hampshire State Library

Plymouth, New Hampshire

Daniel Webster argued his first criminal case in this building, now used as a library. Built in 1774, it served as a county courthouse until 1823. Ezra Stearns, in his 1906 history of this town, wrote: "The walls still echo the spoken words of able men who debated principles and rendered decisions during four decades succeeding the Revolution"... Rejoice he said, that this building "is now dedicated to the mission of literature and knowledge, and is speaking to us in the language of books and memories."

The building was restored in 1876 and moved to its present location on Court Street, where it still today looks much the same as it did in this old photograph supplied by the New Hampshire State Library. It is now owned by the Young Ladies Library Association, which cooperates with the town's elected library trustees in running this free public library.

Harold A. Wyman

Canaan, New Hampshire

The upper photograph shows the Canaan Historical Museum, until 1976 the Canaan Library. Serious structural problems, since remedied, at the time forced the library to move out. The present location is more central, and the library reports better facilities. This building was erected after a fire in 1923 had destroyed most of the center of town. The library entrance is at the right, and the town offices are reached through the shed entrance. The top story, not open to the public, is used for storage.

Northfield Historical Society

Northfield, Vermont

"Vermonters appear to have been avid readers from the earliest times and Northfield was no exception. People depended on weekly papers for news and read them carefully. In 1830 a small library was established at the depot. In 1856 the Vermont and Canada Railroad Association formed a library of 600 volumes in the passenger depot for mental improvement," - according to information supplied by the Northfield Historical Society.

The second librarian to serve here was George W. Brown, who at thirteen had gone to work as a machine-shop timekeeper for the Central Vermont. Later in life he made his fortune as an official of the United Shoe Machinery Company of Boston.

Northfield, Vermont

The sketch by Rebecca A. Merrilees shows the library eventually presented to the town of Northfield by G. W. Brown who "solved the problem of a permanent library in grand style." It was dedicated to the memory of his family in 1906. The exterior of this handsome structure is brick with granite trim, the interior finished in cypress.

Humphrey D. Sutton

Norfolk, Connecticut

Norfolk, Connecticut

Isabella Eldridge intended her combined library and community center as a memorial to her parents. It opened in 1889, and the Great Hall added in 1911 was again the gift of Miss Eldridge. A children's wing was added in 1985. The library is operated by private donation. The Norfolk Library Associates sponsors monthly art exhibits, book sales, and several concerts a year. This library even has a dog, Mulligan, to act as unofficial receptionist.

Miss Isabella liked to keep an eye on her library, and one morning when she was sweeping the front porch and an elderly man asked her if there were a portrait of the founder, she showed him inside, where her own portrait hung. Without recognizing the lady, he tipped her a quarter and remarked, "You are serving a good cause and a noble woman." Miss Bella turned his money in to the library fund.

Becket, Massachusetts

Even with the pulpit and pews removed from the interior, the building still somehow maintains an air of sanctity. This may be the only library in New England which has a flight of stairs up to a choir loft.

Raul Gil

Becket, Massachusetts

A few libraries still retain the old name of Athenaeum, once given to those especially devoted to scholarly reading and discussion. This is one of them. Founded two hundred years ago, it now occupies a church building almost as old. A side view is shown here.

Oakham, Massachusetts

Shown here are the front and back of the Fobes Memorial Library. Inside the tower are stacks arranged in the shape of a fan. The foyer is paved in marble mosaic, and the rooms finished in heavy oak. Pocket doors slide into its massive walls. The many windows provide excellent light.

The story of the Fobes Memorial Library starts in 1792 when Joseph Fobes arrived in town and set up a social library with sixty volumes. The collection was accessible only six times a year, "for taking out and returning books."

During the 1830s the library seems to have lapsed, but it was revived as the Oakham Library Association in 1848. The founders of the association were a harness-maker, the village tailor, and John Parker, who "had a kind of fatherly interest." Half of the first books acquired were listed under History.

The present building was established by vote of the town in 1892. An earnest public campaign was conducted to raise funds, and at the dedication three members of the Fobes family were honored.

Housatonic, Massachusetts

Raul Gil

Great Barrington, Massachusetts

The two libraries in the greater community of Great Barrington in the Berkshires include the Mason Library, above, and the Ramsdell Library in Housatonic. The early postcard shows the original library building.

The Mason Library, built in 1912, was praised the next year in the magazine **Architecture**: "It is perhaps not too much to say that this is the most attractive small library building in America, both because of its intrinsic beauty, and because of thorough suitability to its location." Local residents who had a first complained that it looked like no more than a plain box hastened to change their minds.

Matunuck, Rhode Island

The Robert Beverly Hale Library was established in 1896 as a private institution, endowed by the son of author Edward Everett Hale, best remembered for his story "The Man Without a Country."

For twelve years librarian Ruth Clarke sponsored a resident cat. When a hi-fi system was installed in the library, "Barbie" revealed her musical preferences, sprawling out on the checkout counter when she heard the rolling tones of a pop organ and "regulating the trem on her purr." Barbie now deceased lies buried outside the window behind the librarian's desk.

North Granby, Connecticut

Construction was begun on the Cossitt Library in 1890. In charge of overseeing the work was a young man of twenty-four, a junior at nearby Wesleyan, George Seymour Godard. Godard would, in 1901, be appointed State Librarian for Connecticut and served in that capacity until his death in 1936. The Frederick H. Cossitt Library opened its doors in 1891, one month ahead of schedule.

The design has been appropriately described as "peculiar to itself." In the Queen Anne style, this frame structure on a brick foundation thirty-six by twenty-four feet, occupies a corner lot. The front entrance at second-story level once had a staircase descending straight down to street level rather than divided as now. The lower level, not seen in our picture, has been used as a meeting hall and still has the original large amber stained-glass windows. Windows on the main level are decorated with tiny three-inch panes set around. The third story may be best described as a dwarf hip roof projecting from another hip roof to form a clerestory sided all around with multiple arched windows. Apparently there was once additional decorative woodwork projecting from the top of the roof.

Godard had not only sought advice on construction but on interior arrangement, furnishings, and choice of books. One hundred years later, the original furniture he ordered is still in use. A newspaper account at the time the library opened stated: "The library and reading room are in the upper story, the center of the room being devoted to reading tables, and the book cases are arranged in alcoves about the walls... The whole of the interior is in light and dark colored cypress, finished in the natural wood. The building is heated by stoves. There is a neat vestibule."

These photographs taken around 1909 show construction crews at work on a library.

Andrew Carnegie liked to point out that it was for such men that he intended his libraries. "No class in the community is to be benefited so clearly and so fully as the mass of the people, the wage-earners, the laborers, the manual toilers."

CARNEGIE IN NEW ENGLAND

Andrew Carnegie was born in Scotland in 1835 and soon moved with his parents to this country. While still a child he began his working life as a bobbin-boy in a cotton mill. He was eventually to become one of the America's leading industrialists, or robber barons if you will, with major interests in steel and railroads. We remember him also as a great philanthropist whose chief interest was in libraries.

His first gift of a library was made to the town of his birth, Dumerline, and he followed this up five years later by building a library in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. Before he died in 1919 he would donate a total of $56 million for the construction of new library buildings around the world. The sum was truly astronomical for those days.

In the United States, 1,412 cities and towns became the recipients of his generosity. Of these, a mere seventy-three were in New England, and Rhode Island did not participate in the program at all. Thirty-five of the towns receiving gifts were in Massachusetts, which already had the strongest library system in the United States. In today's terms we might say that these New Englanders were good at applying for grants. The City of Lynn, for example, was able to add two new library buildings, and Worcester and Somerville each added three, while Springfield topped that by putting up a total of four new buildings.

Such extensive construction in large cities gave credence to the idea that "one can always tell a Carnegie library" since the library in a city might be as large as the courthouse, as imposing as city hall. Actually, Carnegie never dictated the style of architecture for the buildings he financed, but since most of his gifts were made in the first decade of the 20th century, the buildings reflect the current sentiment that a library should express the importance of a classical education and the dignity of the life-long pursuit of learning.

The Carnegie Foundation somewhat later warned against some of the excesses of style and the most ponderous of the architectural absurdities, such as had resulted in a waste of interior space. Halls might be unnecessarily wide, sweeping staircases needlessly grand, and monster fireplaces were featured though not needed for heating.

Technically, the rules for getting a Carnegie grant meant that a town must have a population of at least one thousand to qualify. This seems to have been violated in a number of instances. Another requirement was that the town should be willing to supply the site on which the new library was to be placed. This did not create as much of a problem as did the stipulation that the town government agree to provide for the building's continued maintenance and upkeep to the amount, annually, of ten percent of the original cost of the structure. Local authorities were wary of undertaking such an obligation.

In a few instances a building paid for by the Carnegie Foundation proved less enduring than expected. Several have been destroyed by fire in the course of years. The one in Coatesville, Indiana, blew away in a tornado. At Dewitt, Nebraska the books were moved out of the library just in time before the foundation gave way and the walls fell in. These must be the exceptions which prove the rule. Most of the Carnegie-financed buildings have proved so long-lasting as to create major problems for librarians trying nowadays to fit the whole range of modern library services into an antiquated structure.

Many of the original buildings have been expanded once, twice, or even more times. Sometimes the old building serves today as the handsome facade for a series of new additions at the back.

As communities continued to grow, some of the old libraries became branches of a larger library system. Others were converted to different use, as a museum or community center or public-school headquarters, maybe a bank.

And why should not an old Carnegie library some day be transformed into a private dwelling, or maybe apartment house? What joy to sit quietly reading surrounded by the ghosts of fellow-readers, imagining one can hear the faint echo of the story-teller's voice from the old children's room!

For a while it became the fashion to question Carnegie's motive in setting up libraries. "Carnegie did not fool all the people even some of the time," noted Sidney Ditzion dourly in 1947. Socially-conscious people, he said, had properly "participated in exposing the ironmaster's lust for publicity and were united in the opinion that he was trying to cover up Homestead with library buildings." The image is unpleasant: the iron and steel works at Homestead, Pennsylvania in 1892 had been the scene of a bitter and bloody industrial conflict.

It might be worth noting that Samuel Gompers, first president of the American Federation of Labor, took the practical point of view. Yes, he advised in a letter, our main job is to keep on organizing the workers into unions, but we want not only better pay but also shorter hours and "then the workers will have the chance and leisure in which to read books", and for the opportunity he was willing to give due thanks to Andrew Carnegie.

The socialist Upton Sinclair, writing in the publication ***Comrade****, reported this jolly song:*

"And thou shall dine three times a day on Lamb,
With Bacon garnished, and shalt know the joys
of pure beneficent philanthropy;
And daily in the papers thou shalt read
Of ten new libraries, in cities vast,
In villages, and Indian wigwams too,
In Texas ranches, and Esquimaux huts,
In Heaven, Hell, and stations in between."

New England Towns Accepting Carnegie Funds

Connecticut

Bridgeport	$50,000	1914
Derby Neck	3,400	1906
Enfield	20,000	1910
New Haven	60,000	1913
Norwalk	20,000	1901
South Norwalk	20,000	1908
Unionville	8,500	1914
West Haven	10,000	1906

Maine

Auburn	$25,000	1903
Caribou	10,000	1910
Ft. Fairfield	10,000	1911
Freeport	6,500	1905
Guildford	5,750	1908
Houlton	10,000	1903
Lewiston	60,000	1901
Madison	8,000	1904
Milo	8,500	1908
Oakland	10,000	1912
Old Town	10,000	1903
Pittsfield	10,000	1903
Presque Isle	10,000	1906
Rockland	20,000	1902
Rumford	10,000	1903
Vinalhaven	5,200	1906
Waterville	20,000	1902

Massachusetts

Ashland	$10,000	1903
Athol	22,000	1902
Berkley	5,000	1915
Brockton	110,000	1910
Chelsea	60,000	1908
Clinton	25,000	1901
Dighton	6,000	1905
Edgartown	4,000	1902
Granby	5,000	1916
Holliston	10,000	1903
Hudson	12,500	1903

Lakeville	5,000	1912
Lee	12,000	1903
Leominster	27,500	1906
Lynn	50,000	1915
Marlboro	30,000	1902
Melrose	25,000	1901
Millbury	12,500	1915
Needham	10,000	1903
New Marlboro	5,000	1917
Reading	15,000	1902
Revere	20,000	1901
Rockland	12,500	1903
Rockport	10,000	1903
Saugus	17,000	1916
Sharon	10,000	1913
Somerville	123,000	1907
South Hadley	10,000	1905
Springfield	260,000	1905
Stoneham	15,000	1903
Taunton	70,000	1902
Turners Falls	13,500	1903
Walpole	15,000	1901
West Springfield	25,000	1915
Worcester	75,000	1910
New Hampshire		
Berlin	$17,000	1902
Claremont	15,000	1903
Dover	30,000	1902
Franklin	15,000	1903
Lebanon	12,500	1907
Littleton	15,000	1902
Raymond	2,000	1906
Rochester	20,000	1903
Whitefield	7,500	1903
Vermont		
Burlington	$50,000	1901
Fairhaven	8,000	1905
Morristown	7,000	1911
Rockingham	15,000	1903

Hudson, Massachusetts

This massive building fits the stereotype of a Carnegie library. In 1903 a grant of $12,500 permitted the construction of a single-story structure in the grand manner. The second floor, seen here, was added in the 1920s, the large modern wing toward the back in 1967. Before the town ever had a library building, beginning in 1866 its library services had been moved through a series of locations. Hudson is no longer a small town.

Ernest Gould

Littleton, New Hampshire

Made possible in 1902 by a Carnegie grant, this formidable structure is one of the nine Carnegie libraries built in all of New Hampshire. It is a fine example of the monumental style.

Enfield, Connecticut

This photograph, shows the old Carnegie library standing vacant and looking sadly abandonned. It was built in 1910 on a grant of $20,000. Its entrance in the Greek revival style has been violated by the large numbers on the door. The town of Enfield now boasts a handsome new library.

Turners Falls, Massachusetts

A Carnegie library built in 1903 for $13,500 and now listed on the State Muster of Historic Places, this structure was undergoing extensive renovation at the time of our picture.

Mont Vernon, New Hampshire

Please, do not mistake this building for one subsidized by Carnegie! It is the Daland Memorial Library, built in 1909 by the proudly independent citizens of Mont Vernon. At its dedication, one speaker, Albert Pillsbury, excoriated any community which might show its lack of wisdom by "writing its name upon the roll of public mendacity to the detriment of its reputation." In another New England town on a similar occasion, a speaker admitted "it is hard to refuse a good thing when you see it and it does not cost anything, and you might have taken it," but, he declared, community pride should stand in the way of accepting money from "outsiders" — even if their name is Carnegie.

Granby, Massachusetts

In 1916 this small but charming library was built with a Carnegie grant for $5,000.

Lee, Massachusetts

Here is a Carnegie library in the truly grand tradition. In 1903 a contribution of $12,000 permitted construction of a building with marble pillars, tile roof, and classic dome. The modern wing which has been added matches the stone of the original, but the trim has been painted an orange which turns out to be surprisingly compatible. The building is said to be on the site of the simple cabin in which early settlers held their first town meetings.

This sort of jokey postcard showing a library is a rarity. According to the present-day librarian at Isle au Haut, this building is in use as the town hall, with the library occupying only one room. Carnegie never had anything to do with it, and the library is today supported by a town appropriation and by donations from local citizens.

THE INFLUENCE OF RICHARDSON

Library design was significantly changed by Henry Hobson Richardson, an architect based in the Boston area. It has been said of him that re-interpreted New England to itself.

His style was closely based on the Romanesque, which had flourished in the south of France from the end of the 9th century until into the 12th. Many Victorians accustomed to the steeply pitched roof, gables, fanciful detail, and porches of the Gothic Revival Style, found the simplicities of his work disturbingly plain, even strange.

He employed the native stone for buildings which crouched on the ground and sometimes flagged the hills with primitive watch-towers. He dared a bold asymmetry. Buildings by Richardson were characterized by a low arched entranceway. In his libraries, a bank of high windows permitted the interior placement of bookstacks along the wall. Most startling of all, he was capable of putting in a blank exterior wall if it might serve the purpose of keeping out dust and noise. We see now how his innovations were attuned to the need of libraries for good natural light and for suitable interior spaces.

He designed and personally supervised the building of only five libraries, four in Massachusetts and one in Vermont. The first was constructed in Woburn, Massachusetts in 1877. It immediately attracted attention for the boldness of its plan. Next came the Crane Memorial Library, commissioned in 1880. The structure is strikingly massive, a turret reaching only as high as the eaves. In 1883 the Ames family of North Easton built a library to honor Oakes Ames, a brother who had died. The building resembled nothing so much as a monastery. The other two libraries by Richardson were the Converse Memorial in Malden and, in Vermont, the Billings Library at the University of Vermont in Burlington.

Oddly enough, in his person he resembled the buildings he designed. He was ruggedly built, a bluff sort of fellow. He liked to be out on the job supervising the masons, and it was said of him that, unlike most architects of his day, he was willing to modify his design if the workmen could give him compelling reasons. He died at the height of his powers, in 1886.

His work quickly took the public fancy. The eminent architectural critic Henry Van Brunt admired the "strength, simplicity and life" in Richardson's work. Already, in the year of Richardson's death, Van Brunt was complaining, however, of his many imitators' "elaborate affectations of savagery and archaic rudeness." The entrance below qualifies as an example of both the drama and the gloom of the Richardsonian style.

Sterling, Massachusetts

Quincy, Massachusetts

The Thomas Crane Public Library is often cited as the most impressive of Richardson's libraries. It had its modest beginnings in 1871 when the town decided to use its dog money and appropriate an additional sum of $2,500 for a building. An equal amount was to be raised by private subscription.

The 11th edition of the **Encyclopedia Britannica** used a picture of this building to illustrate its article on architecture. The original structure has been enlarged several times. The curving walkways and green lawn shown in this old postcard have been enhanced with more trees and shrubs.

North Brookfield, Massachusetts

Calais, Maine

"For Books are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are...I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous Dragon's teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men." Milton

New Braintree, Massachusetts

New Braintree, Massachusetts

A new library built in 1987 echoes the style made popular by H. H. Richardson. It has the characteristic tower, though with a large window, and we find the low arched entranceway. The wings on each side employ the windows as a decorative feature.

Formerly the library was housed in a converted cheese factory which served as the town hall, shown at left. The library at first occupied a room on the ground floor, then was moved to more ample quarters upstairs. When a fire destroyed the building in 1977, the library lost not only books but important historical material. Its much reduced collection was prudently moved up over the fire-barn until a new building could be provided. The L. H. Pollard Memorial Library was dedicated in 1987, at a cost of about half a million. New Braintree is a community of only about 800 residents. The town can boast that in 106 years, through all manner of vicissitudes, its library has never closed, and during all that time there have been only seven librarians.

Belchertown, Massachusetts

The Clapp Memorial Library is a fine example of the Richardsonian tradition. It was designed by the New York architect H. F. Kilburn, the interior furnished by another New Yorker, H. E. Hartwell. The date of construction was 1887.

Built in the form of a Latin cross, this library features an eighty-foot high tower that rises from the intersection of the transepts and nave. The asymmetrically placed apse and the arched entranceway surmounted by three windows enclosed in barreled arches are all in keeping with Romanesque style.

Local materials were used as much as possible in its construction though the plate glass windows are French, and the red tiles of the roof came from Philadelphia. The rough-cut exterior walls are of local stone. Even the stained glass windows are made from sand and silica mined in western Massachusetts.

Lancaster, Massachusetts

The interior shows the opulence of this community-supported library. Lancaster was one of the earliest towns settled west of Boston, and observed its centennial when America was still ruled from abroad by England. Its library, dedicated in 1868, was designed both as library and a Soldiers' Memorial Hall to honor its sons who had fallen in the Civil War. The main hall is an octagon with skylight and balcony. The railing to the staircase up to the balcony was once draped in velvet to preserve the modesty of ladies. A magnificent childrens' room is said to have been modelled on a Newport ballroom. The modern bookstacks are housed in a separate wing.

Chester, Vermont

A DIVERSITY OF STYLES

Wakefield, New Hampshire

Since the earliest days, New England's libraries have been housed in an omnium-gatherum of buildings in various shapes, sizes, and architectural styles. Beginning around 1880, each town seems to have felt free to burst forth with its own idea of what might be suitable for a library. The first requirement appears to have been that the structure should express both a respect for learning and a proud confidence in America's future. The building might be small, but it must be imposing. It need not look like anything else in town. Often the grandest elements of European architecture were combined in a dizzy eclecticism. While one town indulged a taste for marble columns, the next preferred gaudy stonework, and the next, the shingle style. Less affluent communities might still make do with a simple wooden structure or converted residence. To travel throughout New England is to see it all.

Henry E. Peach

Harrisville, New Hampshire

The library occupies a structure built in 1841 and formerly used as a vestry. It is located in a restored rural mill town. The original Harris of Harrisville built the first mill here, in 1823 when the community was still known as Twitchellville. The town was incorporated in 1870, and seven years later made its first appropriation for a public library, not however without some debate. Some citizens felt that lending out public property would only lead to abuse and even theft. Mill hands, it was said, worked such long hours that they wouldn't have any time to read, anyway. The library survives today as a community center, its one room well stocked with current reading materials.

Gardiner, Maine

"The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them." Mark Twain.

"Read the best books first, or you may not have a chance to read them at all." Thoreau.

Salisbury, Connecticut

Haydenville, Massachusetts

North Stonington, Connecticut

When built in 1902 the Wheeler School and Library was hailed as "an education in art." The lions which still guard the entrance were commissioned in Florence, Italy by Henry D. Wheeler, who created the building as a memorial to his family. The area in front of the building, which now serves as a parking lot, was once adorned with shade trees and beds of roses.

New Hampshire State Library

Hampstead, New Hampshire

C. W. Eddy

Ashby, Massachusetts

Both buildings make a strong statement. Their similarities include the basic design with center entrance, pediment and pillars, a use of garlands for ornament, and the upper panes of the windows in stained glass.

Antrim, New Hampshire

Prospect Harbor, Maine

East Brookfield, Massachusetts

Cornish, Maine

Stafford Springs, Connecticut

North Bridgton, Maine

Naples, Maine

New Boston, New Hampshire

New Hampshire State Library

Enfield, New Hampshire

The building was constructed 1900. The initiative for it came from some friends of the library, but as things worked out, the building finally accommodated not only the library but also town offices and the headquarters of several fraternal organizations. Today the library occupies one whole side of building, having taken over rooms previously occupied by the G.A.R. and the Ladies' Relief Corps. The cupola was used in World War II for spotting enemy planes, though one volunteer has confessed that sitting up there in the dark she used to wonder what she would do if she ever spotted one. Our picture is of unknown date.

New Salem, Massachusetts

In 1842 Charles Dickens visited New England and reported that the houses in the small towns were "so white it makes one wink to look at them... I almost believe that the whole affair could be taken up piecemeal like a child's toy, and crammed into a little box."

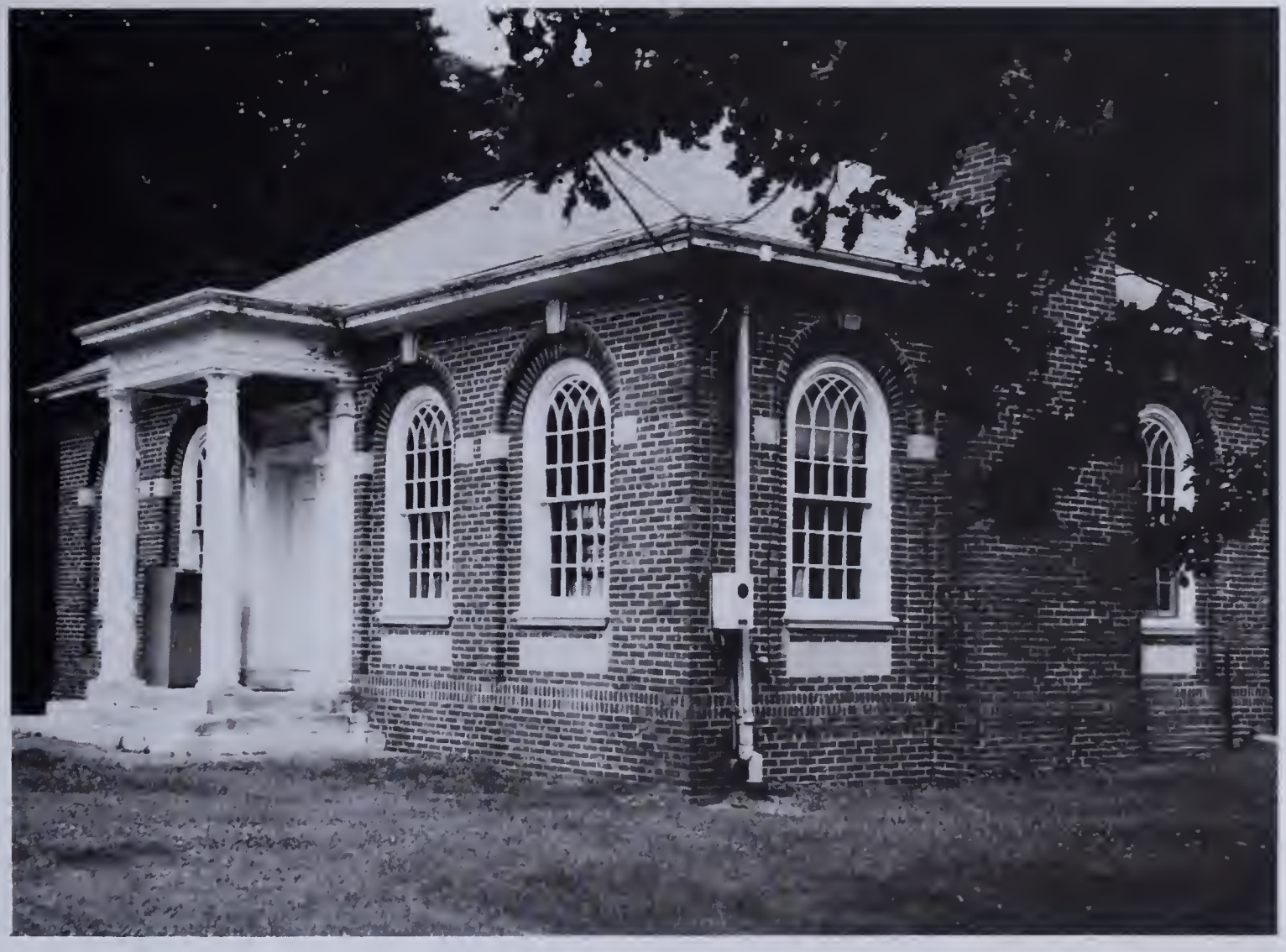
The building in the foreground now used as a library was constructed in 1838, and for its first one hundred and one years served as the town hall. The population of this town is at present under one thousand.

1912
LIBRARY

A public library was established in town in 1892, and this building constructed in 1912: "...a library well-built, comfortable, attractive and located just where it should be, between the church and the townhouse, and overlooking the town." Now the same building is serving a population five times as large as it was then. The popular summertime story hours are held out doors or in the adjacent pavilion owned by the church.

Holland, Massachusetts

COBLEIGH PUBLIC LIBRARY LYNDONVILLE, VERMONT

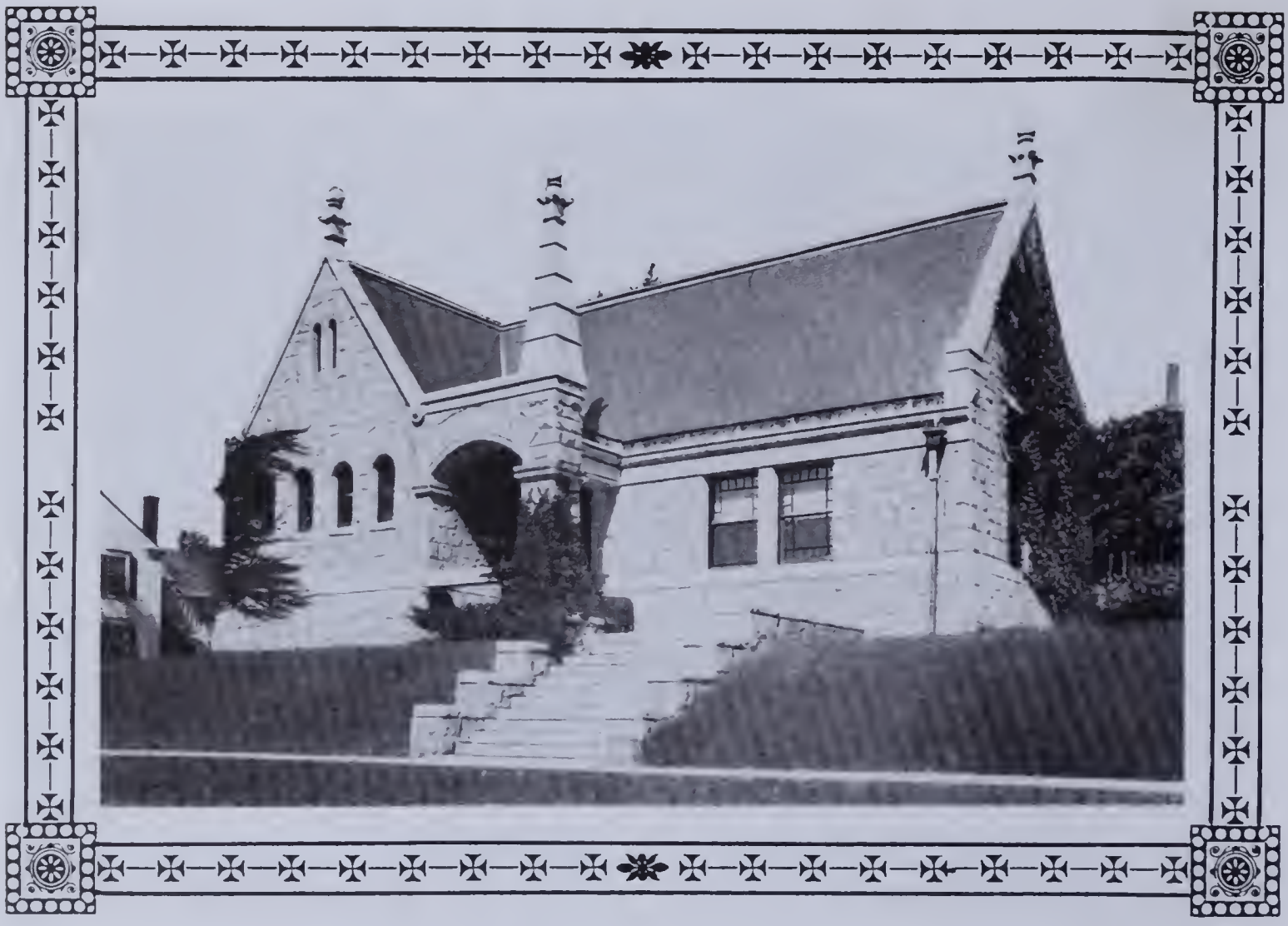


East Woodstock, Connecticut

The May Memorial Library in this small community faces the common with its bandstand, and is adjacent to an old cemetery. The Town of Woodstock supports four libraries in all.

Behind this unpreposessing entrance is a lovely library. The building first served the town as a schoolhouse. Built in 1843, it may today look much the same as it always has, set back off the road in a grove of trees. The library took it over 1944. The interior shown here is a back room used for reference.

North Woodstock, Connecticut



Bucksport, Maine

The Buck Memorial Library celebrated its centennial year in 1987 by commencing work on an addition. The original building, seen here, was the gift of the estate of Richard Pike Buck, a successful businessman in New York, grandson of the founder of Bucksport. Another Buck descendant would serve as the first librarian. It was said of the donor that "his sympathies were as wide and liberal as they were energetic...and the desire for usefulness grew with him as his years increased." The building was constructed of Blue Hill granite and lined with brick. The "charging room" occupied the west wing, with a well-lighted reading room opposite, each room equipped with an open fireplace. A second floor designed to provide storage space was eventually equipped with shelves.

Ernest Gould

Conway, New Hampshire

The majesty of the clock tower makes the little single dormer all the more mysterious.

Millers Falls, Massachusetts

Henry E. Peach

Lempster, New Hampshire

Wales, Massachusetts

In 1897 the Town of Wales voted to accept $100 from the State for the purpose of starting a public library. A local merchant provided shelf space in his store for the books purchased, and his wife served as the first librarian. In 1922 the Baptist Church gave the town this house, which had been built in 1841.

From Sheila Bourbeau of the Historical Society in this town: "A library is books and somewhere to put them and some people to want them there, but even more it is a collection of old memories and hopes of a village that wanted a library, and so it grew."

The building dates from 1810 and for many years was in use as a schoolhouse. In 1894 it was acquired as a library, and is owned and managed by the Cotuit Library Association with contributions from members, special gifts, and funds provided by the Town of Barnstable.

Hopedale, Massachusetts

The statue and fountain adorn a replica of Merton College Chapel in Oxford. The figure represents Hope with her head slightly inclined as though looking to make sure the cornucopias are full and spilling over with plenty for the Town of Hopedale. Below the basin of the fountain appear the dolphin and anchor, traditional symbols of fine books. When first installed, the fountain was provided with a tumbler, which had to be removed when State law forbade public drinking cups. It had been the wish of the donor, Susan P. Draper, "that the cups of water here furnished will refresh many a tired mechanic or schoolboy in long years to come."

New Hampshire State Library

North Conway, New Hampshire

The picture may have been taken shortly after 1917, when the library building was enlarged and became free to all residents. In 1988 a north wing was added to provide more space for the children's books and furnish a balcony to house historical materials. This is one of the public libraries privately endowed and governed by a Library Association.

Woodstock, Vermont

The library on this town's famous Green was the gift of Dr. Edward H. Williams, in 1884. A double-wing transept to the rear was added in 1901. The new roof added ten years ago cost as much as the whole original structure. In the Romanesque style, the building features native materials including red stone from Burlington and grey marble from nearby Proctor.

New Hampshire State Library

Jackson, New Hampshire

This photograph appears to have been taken shortly after the library was built in 1901. The building has the welcoming aspect of a small cottage. It also has the odd distinction of having been relocated and turned ninety degrees when its original site close by was needed for the construction of a stone bridge.

Henry E. Peach

Blue Hill, Maine

In 1938 solid community support achieved a new library building. This was at the end of the Depression. The two-story red brick building was constructed as a Public Works Administration project, with 55% of its cost of $50,000 met by the townspeople—with the help of summer residents. Donations ranged from twenty-five cents to $10,000. Blue Hill has had a long history of support for a library, dating back to 1796.

New Hartford, Connecticut

Known in town as the brick house, the building which now houses the library was constructed in 1818 to serve as a tavern. In 1909 it was acquired by Frank W. Jones, who installed the library on its ground floor, and in 1942 the library in its turn bought the building. Apparently the top floor was once used as a ballroom.

Pelham, Massachusetts

The library occupies one room in the town hall. This is a rear view of the building showing the library's windows and entrance for the handicapped. Pelham, known for its part in Shay's Rebellion, has never been a rich town, and in the middle of the nineteenth century tried to dissolve its local government and give itself away to neighboring Amherst. Amherst would have none of it.

Southwick, Massachusetts

This picture was taken around 1908. The building had been erected fifteen years before, when the population of the town was about seven hundred. It has remained in use as a library to this day though the population of Southwick has now grown to about 8,000. "The cellar has been excavated to house a children's collection but little else has changed with the exception of age."

Florence, Massachusetts

The Patten Free Library opened its doors in 1891. The Library Association, formed much earlier in 1847 had included four members of the Patten family. This building, designed by a native of Bath, George E. Harding, has been enlarged several times since the time of this postcard to include a children's room, reference room, and an auditorium. The turret now houses a genealogical collection and museum of local history.

Deering, New Hampshire

This small building certainly has taking ways. On a snowy winter's day, its Christmas wreath offered a welcome.

Ellsworth, Maine

This Federalist classic was built in 1817 by Col. Meltiah Jordan, who had served in the Revolutionary War. It is known as the Tisdale House and was in private hands until 1897 when it was remodelled as a public library.

When built, this house overlooked a river crowded with schooners in the coastal trade. Now there are pleasure boats with fishermen casting for striped bass and salmon.

Montague Center, Massachusetts

Brewster, Massachusetts

The building stands as a classic example of the Victorian style of stick architecture. Note the trim on the gables and the stained glass in the upper part of the windows. The building now serves as the front part of an enlarged library. Our postcard dates from around 1909.

Judging by the buggy and the lady's costume in our postcard, this picture was taken shortly after the library opened to the public in 1888. Since that date there have been three additions to the building. The part shown here now contains just the circulation desk and adult fiction.

The present modern library, pride of the town, bears little relationship to this original structure shown in a postcard. The library began in 1891 when the people of the village met to form an association and set a membership fee of twenty-five cents. At first a seven-shelf bookcase was placed in the post office, and donations of books were welcomed. In 1898 the first library building was erected at the cost of $425.

Nelson, New Hampshire

In this town of around five hundred, the library circulation reaches an annual high of four thousand volumes. The small size of the building may attest to the fact that "at budget-time the library and the cemetery come in last," a complaint heard not only here but in other towns as well.

Leicester, Massachusetts

The exterior barely hints at the stunning interior. Two reading rooms with fireplaces and huge mirrors face each other across a central hallway. It is still easy to picture the day when the library opened its doors in 1895 and the books were transferred in by horse and wagon, a task which took one full week.

Granville, Massachusetts

Hardwick, Massachusetts

Greenfield, New Hampshire

> *"Books are the carriers of civilization. Without books, history is silent, literature dumb, science crippled, thought and speculation at a standstill."*
>
> *— Barbara Tuchman*

Henry E. Peach

Marlborough, New Hampshire

The Frost Free Library is a fine example of a library building architecturally unique in its town. The builder, who may have also designed the structure, was Jonathan Jones, the date 1867.

Williamsburg, Massachusetts

Uxbridge, Massachusetts

The castellated tower sets this library apart. With its Gothic window treatment and checkerboard trim, it all adds up to one impressive construction.

Cheshire, Massachusetts

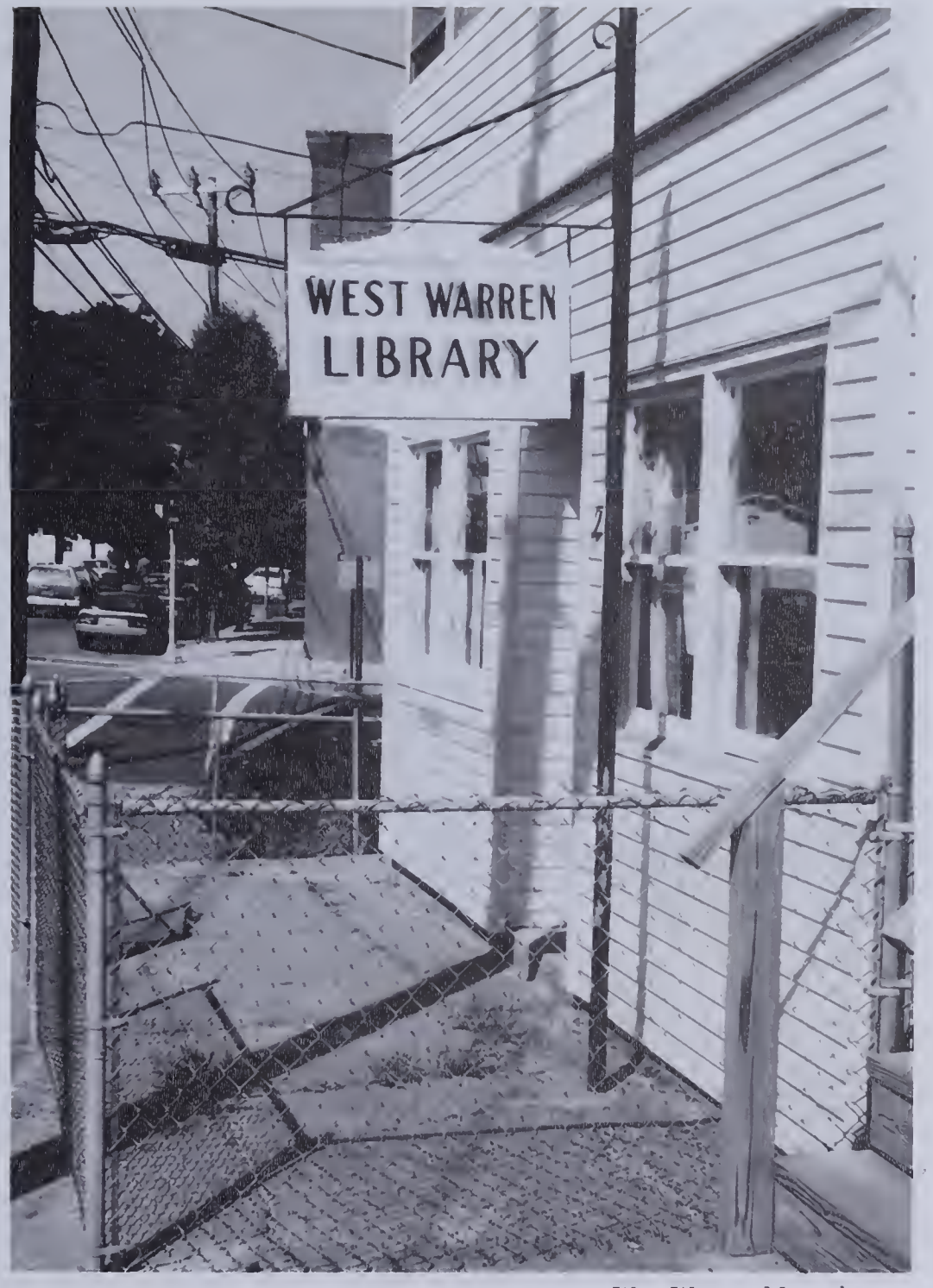
Cliff Island, Maine

Eastford, Connecticut

Raul Gil

Goshen, Massachusetts

Worthington, Massachusetts



West Warren, Massachusetts

Moosup, Connecticut

Raul Gil

Hancock, Massachusetts

Raul Gil

Williamstown, Massachusetts

North Grosvenordale, Connecticut

Henry E. Peach

Goshen, New Hampshire

North Amherst, Massachusetts

Bristol, Connecticut

The building which no longer stands served briefly as the public library from 1896 until 1907 until a new library building could be constructed.

Sunderland, Massachusetts

Wendell, Massachusetts

Andover, Maine

An octagonal library is a rarity. The library at Andover moved into the old Universalist Church in 1947. The exterior has been reshingled and the interior remodelled, yet to this day "you enter a small vestry with leaded windows, go up a few steps and into a large room with a cathedral ceiling all finished in the natural brown ash wood, from which hangs a huge wrought iron chandelier with many oil lamps. There are more stained glass windows on each side of the eight angles."
(Reported by the Friday Club of Andover in 1979)

Plainfield, Massachusetts

The Shaw Memorial Library is on the left, and on the right is the entrance to the Hollock Memorial School.

84--LIBRARY AND SCHOOL, MONHEGAN ISLAND, MAINE.

Depth isn't everything: the spruce
has no taproot, but to hold on
spreads its underpinnings thin—

a gathering in one continuous,
meshing intimacy, the interface
of unrelated fibers
joining hands like last survivors
who, though not even neighbors
hitherto, know in their predicament
security at best is shallow…"

—Amy Clampitt
"The Spruce Has No Taproot"

Hinsdale, Massachusetts

South Deerfield, Massachusetts

Alstead, New Hampshire

Madison, Maine

Orford, New Hampshire

A library association was organized in 1798; by 1823 it owned two hundred volumes, a large collection by the standards of that day. Now Orford boasts two libraries, the second one a public library established in 1893 when the State offered each town $100 for this purpose.

The Social Library, after an up-and-down history, occupies a building dating back to 1840 formerly used as a millinery shop. The Association moved it to its present location.

Princeton, Massachusetts

Ware, Massachusetts

Saunderstown, Rhode Island

Ernest Gould

Derry, New Hampshire

Northfield, Connecticut

The Gilbert Library occupied a part of the parsonage for the Congregational Church. William L. Gilbert died in 1890 leaving money to build the parsonage, "in which shall be a suitable room devoted to the use of a free library." The library was established two years later and moved into this building in '96. In the 1940s the church was to provide a second room. The library continued in this building until 1987, when a separate, new, and modern building was completed. Undoubtedly the new library is more efficient. In a sentimental gesture its main entrance repeats the design of the old porch entrance you see on the right.

Post Mills, Vermont

The library is named in honor of George Peabody (1795-1869), an early American philanthropist who donated a collection of books, many now rare. He always remembered the wonderful winter he spent as a boy of fifteen visiting his grandfather in the tiny town of Post Mills. He hoped that members of the Dodge family might always serve as trustees of his library, but lately no Dodges have resided in town.

Raul Gil

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

In 1905 a branch of the Stockbridge library was opened in this chapel. Many of the books on the shelves were on loan from a private collection but requests might also be made of the central branch. The Glendale Library was operated by volunteers and finally closed in 1930.

THE CLOCK KEEPS TICKING

Many library administrations are still valiantly making use of buildings which are sadly outmoded. Others have found the money and with community support built additions to the old building to house the full range of modern library services. Sometimes the older structure has been left to serve as the facade facing the street. One steps through heavy wooden doors past dark woodwork, the fireplaces, and the light filtered in through stained glass, into a present-century library with its bright large areas. On the whole, towns seem to have shown a commendable respect for the old as they advance to the new. We are in their debt for having preserved an essential part of New England's heritage.

Humphrey Sutton

Litchfield, Connecticut

The Oliver Walcott Library, supported largely by donations, consists of a house built in 1799 handsomely preserved in a row of similarly significant old houses- and a modern addition to the rear added in the 1960s. The addition is hidden from the street, the relationship of old and new cleverly managed.

Monson, Massachusetts

With the new addition which opened in 1990, the Horatio Lyon Memorial constructed in 1881 has been turned into an illustration from a fairy tale. The old and the new are joined in one building with the children's section and a quiet reading area for adults at opposite ends. The "peaks" deliberately echo the library's old clock tower and the spire of the church in the background. The photograph to the left shows the addition under construction.

The postcard, mailed in 1913, shows the library built two years before. It is still there, concealed within the greatly expanded structure of the modern building shown on the opposite page, which now contains a children's room and librarian's offices. The major renovation was accomplished in 1976.

Pomfret, Connecticut

The library in Pomfret had its beginnings in 1739 when "a solemn covenant was entered into by sixteen residents of Pomfret, Woodstock, and Killingly, including the ministers of several parishes, to pay the sum affixed to their names, for the establishment of a library." This association bore the cumbersome name of The United English Library for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge and Useful Knowledge.

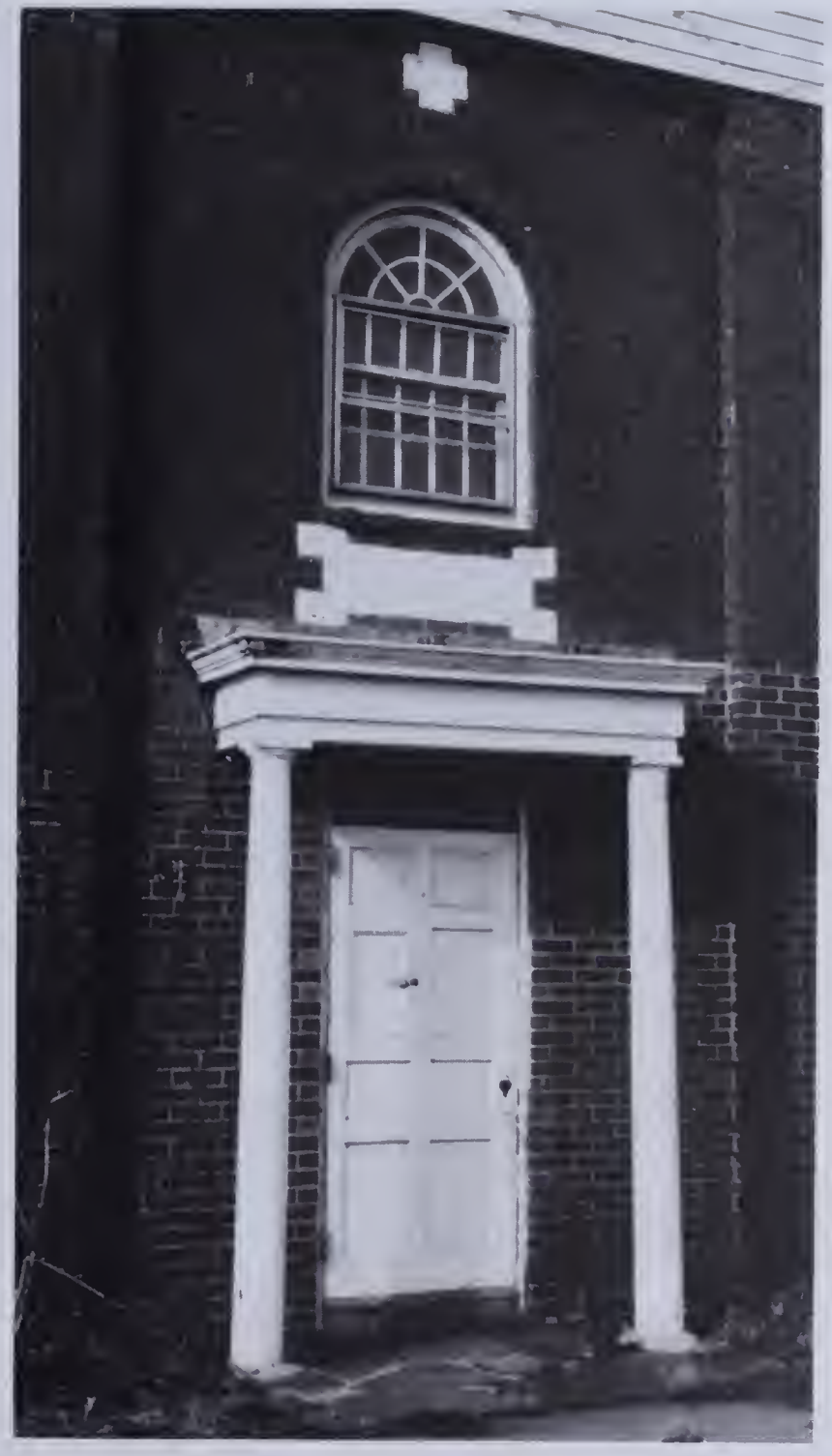
Raul Gil

Greenville, Massachusetts

The community originally known as South Leicester had its own social library as early as 1793. "...the books were not to be kept over six weeks, with a fine of four pence for every leaf turned down and every drop of tallow found in any volume. Six months later it was voted to procure a bookcase and to have the library open once a fortnight for three hours." Beginning in 1795, other townspeople were allowed to take out books for a small sum.

The building originally served as the engine house for the fire department. When the library took over in 1901, the only exterior change made was to narrow the door. Long since abandonned as a library, the building is now in what Victorians might have called in a state of pleasing decay.

The library once occupied the front half of a building which had served as a church originally. The building was greatly enlarged in 1934 to serve as a community center housing the library as well as meeting rooms, an auditorium, full kitchen and diningroom, and the town offices. In that Depression year, the total cost of the renovation and expansion was $5,000, including digging a well and installing a new heating plant. The building was occupied by the library as recently as 1987.



Marlborough, Connecticut

Harwinton, Connecticut

Theodore A. Hungerford had wanted to build a mausoleum for himself in New York City, but then his nephew convinced him to build this library. The donor lies buried under the northwest corner. Librarians used to claim that they saw Mr. Hungerford's ghost.

Seventy years after this handsome structure was dedicated in 1912, its 950 square feet could no longer fill the needs of a library and a new one was built. At the time of this photograph the Hungerford Memorial Library was standing vacant though plans were being made to convert it to other community use.

New Hampshire State Library

Grantham, New Hampshire

When this building was in use, the library occupied the righthand side, the selectmen had their offices here, and there was also a room set aside for the ladies. The building had been erected in 1903, presented to the town by Lorenzo Dunbar, after whom the public library was named. Recently vacant, plans have been made to enlarge and renovate this building when funds become available.

Falls Village, Connecticut

Sturbridge, Massachusetts

In 1896 the Joshua Hyde Library was built with a bequest from the estate of a Boston lawyer who wished to honor the memory of his parents who had been local farmers. An extensive new addition, not shown in our photograph, was added in 1989, providing more space and vastly improved facilities.

Woodbury, Connecticut

The library shown here has been vastly enlarged.

Spencer, Massachusetts

The postcard shows the Richard Sugden Library at around the turn of the century. The library was built in 1888, and in the picture is already covered with ivy. The two-decker next door was torn down in 1990 to make room for a new addition. The building was designed by Horace B. Wadlin, who was later appointed head of the Boston Public Library. This building once had an Emergency Room in the basement, open to any physicians who would help keep it stocked. Library plans for the future include making the original librarian's office into a climate-controlled rare book room.

Henry Ward Beecher was an early patron. He gave lectures to benefit the library, and possibly for this reason was granted the special privilege of taking out as many as four books a week. Ralph Waldo Emerson, on the other hand, was only permitted three.

The library is housed in a modified Federal-style building constructed in 1815 to serve as a courthouse. It was acquired in 1871 by a wealthy resident who heard, while vacationing in Rome, that the building was about to be sold at auction. The present problems of upkeep are poignantly summarized: The one hundred year old roof leaks, there's water in the basement, the heating system, wiring, and plumbing need to be updated. "The list goes on and on. A library and its building are mutually dependent. We are trying to save two treasures." In 1987 for the first time this private library asked for funds from the town. It is now conducting a vigorous campaign to raise more money.

Raul Gil

Lenox, Massachusetts

Somers, Connecticut

The old library was built in 1896. The new, with little to remind one of the old, opened in 1988.

MORE TREASURES

The following lists of important libraries have been made up from information furnished by the various state agencies for historic preservation. In addition to the National Register of Historic Places, each state makes up its own list. In Vermont, for example, the State register contains 25,000 citations. The Massachusetts register is the size of the phone book for a small city. Even so, some libraries may not come to special notice because they fall within the boundaries of an historic district.

Please note that libraries pictured in this book do not appear here.

CONNECTICUT

Ansonia	Ansonia Library
Derby	Harcourt Wood Memorial Library
Hartford	Connecticut State Library
	Wadsworth Athenaeum
New London	New London Public Library
Meriden	Curtis Memorial Library
Milford	Taylor Memorial Library
Salisbury	Scoville Memorial Library
Shelton	Plumb Memorial Library
Southington	Southington Public Library

MASSACHUSETTS

Andover	Memorial Hall Library
Braintree	Thayer Public Library
Cambridge	Cambridge Public Library
Fairhaven	Millicent Library
Fall River	Public Library
Gardner	Levi Heywood Memorial Library
Lawrence	Lawrence Old Public Library
Lynn	Lynn Public Library
Melrose	Melrose Public Library
North Adams	North Adams Public Library
Peabody	Peabody Institute Library
Provincetown	Provincetown Public Library
Rockland	Rockland Memorial Library
Rockport	Carnegie Library
Somerville	Central Library
West Somerville	West Somerville Branch Library
Springfield	Memorial Square Library
Stoneham	Stoneham Public Library
Taunton	Taunton Public Library
Waltham	Francis Buttrick Library
Weymouth	Fogg Library
Woburn	Woburn Public Library
Worcester	Greendale Branch Library
	Quinsigamond Branch Library
	South Worcester Branch Library

MAINE

Alfred	Parson Memorial Library
Auburn	Auburn Public Library
Augusta	Lithgow Public Library
Bangor	Bangor Public Library
Bethel	Bethel Library Association
Calais	Calais Free Library
Camden	Camden Public Library
Clinton	Brown Memorial Library
Corinna	Stewart Free Library
Damariscotta	Skidompha Library
Dexter	Abbott Memorial Library

East Blue Hill	East Blue Hill Public Library
Eastport	Peavey Memorial Library
Eliot	William Fogg Library
Fairfield	Lawrence Public Library
Farmington	Cutler Memorial Library
Fort Fairfield	Fort Fairfield Public Library
Freeport	B.H. Bartol Library
Fryeburg	Fryeburg Public Library
Gorham	Baxter Memorial Library
Guilford	Guilford Memorial Library
Hallowell	Hubbard Free Library
Hollis Center	Salmon Falls Village Library
Houlton	Cary Library
Kennebunk	Kennebunk Free Library
Kennebunkport	Louis T. Graves Memorial Library
Kittery	Rice Public Library
Lewiston	Lewiston Public Library
Machias	Porter Memorial Library
Madison	Madison Public Library
Milo	Milo Free Public Library
Mount Desert	Somesville Library Association
New Gloucester	New Gloucester Public Library
North Jay	Niles Memorial Library
Norway	Norway Memorial Library
Ogunquit	Ogunquit Memorial Library
Pittsfield	Pittsfield Public Library
Rangely	Rangely Public Library
Rockland	Rockland Public Library
Rockport	Rockport Public Library
Rumford	Rumford Public Library
Skowhegan	Skowhegan Free Public Library
South China	South China Library
Vinalhaven	Carnegie Public Library
West Paris	West Paris Public Library
Westbrook	Walker Memorial Library
Wilton	Goodspeed Memorial Library
Winterport	Winterport Memorial Library
Winthrop	Charles M. Bailey Public Library
York	York Public Library

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Acworth	Acworth Silsbury Library
Amherst	Amherst Town Library
Barnstead	Oscar Foss Memorial Library
Belmont	Belmont Public Library
Boscawen	Boscawen Public Library
Bristol	Minot-Sleeper Library
Centre Harbor	Nichold Memorial Library
Charlestown	Silsby Free Library
Claremont	Claremont Public Library
Concord	Concord Public Library
	New Hampshire State Library
East Derry	The Taylor Library
Exeter	Exeter Public Library
Gilmanton	Gilmanton Iron Works Library
Hancock	Hancock Town Library
Haverhill	Haverhill Library
Holderness	Holderness Free Library
Hudson	Hills Memorial Library
Kingston	Nichols Memorial Library
Laconia	Gale Memorial Library
	Ossian W. Goss Reading Room
Lebanon	Lebanon Public Library
Lyme	Converse Free Library
Meredith	Meredith Public Library
Milford	Milford Town House and Library Annex
Nashua	Hunt Memorial Library
New Hampton	Gordon-Nash Library
Newington	Landon Library
Newmarket	John Webster Hall Library
Newport	Richards Free Library
Northfield	Hall Memorial Library
Pittsfield	Josiah Carpenter Library
Portsmouth	Portsmouth Public Library
Sandwich	Samuel H. Wentworth Library
Tamworth	Cook Memorial Library
Wakefield	Wakefield Public Library
Wilton	Wilton Public and Gregg Free Library
Winchester	Conant Public Library

RHODE ISLAND

Barrington	Barrington Public Library
Bristol	Bristol Public Library
East Greenwich	East Greenwich Public Library
Foster	Foster Public Library
New Shoreham	New Shoreham Public Library
Newport	Redwood Library
Pawtucket	Deborah Cooke Sayles Library
Providence	The Athenaeum
	Providence Public Library
South Kingstown	South Kingstown Public Library
Westerly	Westerly Public Library
West Warwick	Crompton Library

VERMONT

Barre	Aldrich Public Library
Canaan	Alice Ward Memorial Library
Chelsea	Chelsea Town Library and Town Office
Cornwall	Cornwall Public Library and D.A.R.
Danville	Danville Public Library
Derby	Haskell Free Library and Opera House
Guildhall	Guildhall Public Library and
	Masonic Building
Hardwick	Jeudevine Memorial Library
Lunenberg	Alden Bach Memorial Library
Marshfield	Jaquith Memorial Library
Middlebury	Ilsely Library
Montpelier	Kellogg-Hubbard Library
Newport	Goodrich Memorial Library
Randolph	Kimball Public Library
Royalton	Royalton Public Library
St. Albans	St. Albans Free Library
St. Johnsbury	St. Johnsbury Athenaeum
Shoreham	Shoreham Public Library
Springfield	Spafford Public Library
Swanton	Swanton Public Library
Waitsfield	Joslin Library
Wallingford	Gilbert Hart Library

Shutesbury, Massachusetts

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The postcards reprinted here are from the collection of Norman D. Stevens, Director of the University Libraries, University of Connecticut and of the private Molesworth Institute in Storrs, Connecticut. He has generously shared a few notable examples from the thousands of postcards he owns showing libraries throughout the United States and the world.

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WITHDRAWN
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We are especially grateful to Raul Gil for his patient advice and technical help in the preparation of this book. Henry E. Peach has also generously given of his time. John K. Jones provided vital information from his comprehensive collection of color slides showing libraries in Maine. Matthew J. Higgins of the New Hampshire State Library kindly shared the resources of his office. In Massachusetts, we owe much to the suggestions made by Patience K. Jackson, Library Building Consultant, Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. Yet in each of the six New England states and in hundreds of communities we found enthusiastic supporters for this project, all of whom deserve thanks.

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LIBRARIES
IN NEW ENGLAND

Margaret E. Haller is the author of two published books, one a collector's guide to the old book trade and one on collecting old photographs. She lives in Holland, Massachusetts. She explains her interest in small-town New England libraries:

"Books have been written extolling the traditional design of the old churches which grace the commons of so many New England towns. By contrast one can only stand amazed at the wild diversity in the architecture of the library buildings of these same towns. Their style ranges from monumental grandeur through purely functional to funky and odd. Each town has gone its own way".

BOOKCRAFT